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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Leslye Krutko

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 29, 2007

Approved

Date

5/30/07

SUBJECT: FINAL REPORT ON HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEE ASSISTANCE

INFORMATION

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the Gulf Coast. One of the costliest and deadliest natural disasters in United States' history, Hurricane Katrina destroyed entire communities along the Gulf Coast, with the City of New Orleans suffering particular devastation. Hundreds of thousands of people from New Orleans and the surrounding areas lost their homes, schools, jobs, and, in extreme cases, their families. The City of San José, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara (the County), San Jose State University (SJSU), and the Silicon Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross (Red Cross), was amongst the first cities in the nation to respond to the needs of those displaced by the Hurricane.

On September 9, 2005, the Mayor and City Council approved a series of actions to provide relief and recovery services for victims of the Hurricane. The City made an initial commitment to welcome 100 evacuees. In preparation of the evacuees' arrival, the City coordinated with SJSU, the County, and the Red Cross to provide them with services such as housing, furniture, job search assistance, and school enrollment for children. Additionally, the City donated \$0.50 per San José resident to the Red Cross to support their local efforts on behalf the of Katrina evacuees arriving in San José.

City Response and Services

In partnership with the County of Santa Clara, the Housing Department was charged with locating affordable housing available to meet the long-term housing needs of evacuees and determining their eligibility for federal rental assistance. After residing temporarily in housing provided by San José State University, by October of 2005, a total of 73 households, or 177 individuals, received Section 8 Vouchers and settled into permanent housing.

The Housing Department also undertook the role of assessing the short- and long-term needs of the evacuees and identifying how these needs might be met. Towards this goal, in September,

2006, the Housing Department temporarily hired Dolores De Hoyos, a former City homeless service provider, to provide the evacuees with individualized need assessments, resource development, and program referrals. Since September, the Housing Department has worked closely with the Hurricane Katrina evacuees to meet their requests for assistance and provide needed resources and referrals, including:

- Section 8 Vouchers from the County of Santa Clara Housing Authority to meet their long-term affordable housing needs;
- Fifty of the evacuees received monthly bus passes for six months from the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority;
- One of the senior clients received employment with the Council on Aging;
- Emergency assistance such as food, school clothing, auto repair, deposit and rent subsidies, and medicine;
- Donated household items such as furniture and kitchen equipment; and
- Educational and/or vocational training at local community colleges, the Neighborhood Development Center, and the work2future One-Stop career resource center.

Additional assistance was provided to the Katrina evacuees by member agencies of the Emergency Assistance Network (EAN) and other civic philanthropic organizations, including:

- The Tzu Chi Foundation – organized a Holiday party for the Katrina evacuees as well as periodic assistance with food and cash cards;
- Sacred Heart Community Services – provided clothing and emergency food;
- The Santa Clara County Department of Social Services Season of Sharing – provided one-time grants for rent and mortgage assistance;
- The Second Harvest Food Bank – established ongoing food bags for Katrina clients;
- Emmanuel Church – provided financial contributions.

On April 13th, the Housing Department held a final event at Happy Hollow for the Katrina evacuees who participated in San José's "after-care" program. Forty-seven of the evacuees attended the event and received information to assist them in evaluating their long-term relocation or settling options. In particular, the attendees received information on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) programs to assist clients should they choose to relocate back to New Orleans or another city of their choosing, and a checklist providing the status of the reinstitution of basic services in New Orleans. Upon reading the number of services still lacking in New Orleans, the majority of the event attendees said they did not plan on returning. Along with the Katrina evacuees and City staff, members of the Tzu Chi Foundation participated in the event. The attendees spent the remainder of the event eating, enjoying the zoo and free rides, and receiving door prizes.

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Finally, staff is currently gathering together receipts for services provided on the behalf of the Katrina evacuees to submit for reimbursement from FEMA. To ensure that all of evacuees' needs were met, the City expended approximately \$220,000 in staffing costs, and Red Cross and Emergency Housing Consortium services.


LESLYE KRUTKO
Director, Housing

